

# 10 Myths and Facts about Food Stamp Benefits and the Homeless

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**MYTH: You must have housing and a mailing address to get food stamps.**

**FACT:** You can get food stamp benefits even if you live on the streets and don't have a mailing address. If you live in a shelter, bring a letter from a shelter employee that says you live there when you apply.

2

**MYTH: People who live in shelters can't get food stamps because they already get free meals.**

**FACT:** You can get food stamp benefits even if you live in a shelter with meals. You can't be turned down only because you live in a homeless shelter with meals.

3

**MYTH: You must have a place to cook and store food to get food stamps.**

**FACT:** You can't be turned down for food stamp benefits because you don't have a kitchen or a place to cook.

4

**MYTH: You need a photo ID to get food stamps.**

**FACT:** You need proof of identity. A photo ID is one way to prove identity. You can't be turned down for food stamp benefits because you don't have photo ID. You can use another ID like a work or school badge, a health benefits card, an ID from another social service, a pay stub, a birth certificate, or a voter registration card. The food stamp worker can also check your identity by calling shelter workers or employers.

5

**MYTH: You can buy food only at grocery stores.**

**FACT:** Homeless people can use food stamp benefits at other places. You can use food stamp benefits to pay for meals at soup kitchens and homeless shelters that are authorized to accept food stamp benefits.

6

**MYTH: Homeless people can't use food stamps at restaurants.**

**FACT:** In some States, homeless people can use food stamp benefits at certain restaurants. Tell your food stamp worker if you are homeless and want to use food stamp benefits at restaurants. You will get a special card to buy meals at restaurants.

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**MYTH: It is difficult for homeless people to apply and there is no help available.**

**FACT:** Food stamp offices must set up ways to serve homeless people. They can find an authorized representative or mail your benefits to the shelter where you stay. The food stamp office can't make you fill out forms every month.

8

**MYTH: Homeless youth have to provide their parent's income when they apply for food stamps.**

**FACT:** Homeless young people can apply for food stamp benefits on their own. Their parent's income does not count. If you live in a shelter, bring a letter from a shelter employee that says you live there when you apply.

9

**MYTH: You must follow the work requirements to apply for food stamps.**

**FACT:** Homeless people with no dependents do not need to have a job or look for a job to apply for food stamp benefits. Once they get food stamp benefits, they do not have to work for three months. After that, they must register for work, take employment training, attend job fairs, or accept a reasonable job offer to keep food stamp benefits. This rule doesn't apply to people with children 6 years old or younger; people with disabilities; and in certain areas in some States. Your food stamp worker will tell you which work requirements apply to you.

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**MYTH: Food stamps have to be paid back.**

**FACT:** People who get the right amount of food stamp benefits do not have to pay them back. Make sure the information you give when you apply is correct. If you get food stamp benefits based on wrong information, then you will have to pay them back.



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